

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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R 241304Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1029
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HELSINKI 0384

E.O. 11652: NGDS
TAGS: PFOR, FI, NO, UR, MORG
SUBJECT: FINNISH REACTION TO NORWEGIAN NEWS LEAK ABOUT KEKKONEN
CRITICISM FRG PARTICIPATION IN NATO MANEUVERS IN NORWAY

REF: 76 OSLO 4969

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THERE WAS WIDESPREAD NEWSPAPER REACTION
IN FINLAND TO SUBJECT LEAK, BUT GOF FONMIN IF EFFECT
DECLINED SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT. FINNISH REACTION TO FRG
TROOP PARTICIPATION IN NATO EXERCISES IN NORWAY CONSISTENT
WITH FINNISH CONCERN OVER GERMAN MILITARY ROLE IN SCANDI-
NAVIAN AREA AND RELATION TO 1948 FINNISH-SOVIET TREATY
ON FRIENDSHIP, COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE (FCML).
END SUMMARY

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

2. FINNISH NEWSPAPERS GAVE FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE FEB 18 TO
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NORWEGIAN NEWSPAPER AFTENPOSTEN ARTICLE WHICH REPORTED
THAT ON HIS VISIT TO NORWAY LAST FALL, FINNISH
PRESIDENT KEKKONEN COMMENTED NEGATIVELY TO GON ON
PARTICIPATION BY FRG TROOPS IN NATO MILITARY
EXERCISES IN NORWAY. FINNISH PAPERS ALSO QUOTED
WEST GERMAN PAPER DIE WELT DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT
AS YET ANOTHER SERVICE TO MOSCOW BY COUNTRY THAT IS

NOT SOVEREIGN.

3. GOF FONMIN SAID THAT DURING PRESIDENT'S VISIT TALKS WERE CONDUCTED ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO BOTH PARTIES AND IT NATURAL THAT INCLUDED WERE MATTERS RELATING TO POSITION OF NORTHERN EUROPE AND PROBLEMS OF SECURITY THERE. HOWEVER, FONMIN SAID IT HAD NO WISH TO DISCUSS IN PUBLIC CONTENTS OF THE DISCUSSION OWING TO CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF TALKS.

4.FOLLOWING INITIAL NEWS REPORTS, SEVERAL FINNISH NEWSPAPERS COMMENTED EDITORIALY ON MATTER. EDITORIALS WERE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF KEKKONEN'S REPORTED CONCERN OVER GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN NATO MANEUVERS IN NORWAY AND SEVERAL QUESTIONED HOW AND WHY DISCUSSION OF CONFIDENTIAL MATTER ALLOWED TO LEAK. INDEPENDENT HELSINGIN SANOMAT SAID THAT FOR HISTORIAL REASONS ARRIVAL, EVEN BRIEFLY, OF HOWEVER SMALL A UNIT FROM FRG IN NORWAY MAY BE TAKEN AS AN INTENSIFICATION OF NATO ACTIVITIES, AND SAID LEAK AROUSES MISGIVING THAT FINLAND BEING USED AS WEAPON IN SOMETHING, E.G. IN NORWEGIAN ELECTIONS OR IN NORWAY'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION. CONSERVATIVE UUSI SUOMI FOCUSED ON DIE WELT ATTACK, SAYING IT ENTIRELY NORMAL FOR FINLAND RAISE SUCH QUESTION WITH NORWAY AND REJECTING AS AN EFFRONT DIE WELT'S CONCLUSIONS RE FINLAND'S SOVEREIGNTY.

5. SWEDISH LANGUAGE HUFVUDSTADSBLADET NOTES
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AFTENPOSTED REPORTS HAVE NOT BEEN DENIED AND THUS MUST BE ASSUMED TO BE TRUE, SUGGESTING THAT MOTIVE FOR LEAK MAY LIE IN NORWEGIAN POLITICAL INFIGHTING. SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PAPER DEMARI CRITICIZED NORWEGIAN DECISION TO ALLOW GERMAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN NORTHERN EUROPE, TO WHICH FINNISH POSTWAR POLICY HAS BEEN OPPOSED, AS REFLECTED (AT LEAST WHERE FINLAND CONCERNED) IN WORDING OF 1948 FINNISH/SOVIET FCMA TREATY. DEMARI NOTES THAT FINLAND HAS REASON KEEP CLOSE EYE ON CHANGES IN POLITICAL SITUATION OF NORTHERN EUROPE. CENTER PARTY PAPER SUOMENMAA SIAD FRG PARTICIPATION IN NORWEGIAN NATO MANEUVERS LEADS TO CONCLUSION THAT NORWAY IS CHANGING HER SECURITY POLICY, AND THUS IT QUITE NATURAL THAT KEKKONEN WOULD RAISE ISSUE. COMMUNIST PAPER KANSAN UUTISET SAID THAT IF KEKKONEN DID DISCUSS MATTER, HIS WARNING JUSTIFIED, BECAUSE NORWEGIAN DECISION LIKELY TO RAISE MILITARY TENSION IN AREA.

END UNCLASSIFIED.

6. DCM HAD OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS AFFAIR WITH COUNTER-PART IN FRG EMBASSY, WHO SIAD FRG HAD ALREADY BEEN AWARE OF FINNISH APPROACH TO GON AND HAD NOT BEEN SURPRISED AT FINNISH POSITION. HE SAID LEAK PUBLISHED BY PRO-NATO AFTENPOSTEN POSSIBLY CONNECTED WITH VISIT TO NORWAY BY FRG DEFENSE MINISTER, SCHEDULED IN NEAR FUTURE.

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7. COMMENT; REACTION TO AFTEN POSTEN REVELATION UNDERSCORES FINNISH SENSITIVITIES TO PARTICIPATION FRG TROOPS IN NATO MILITARY MANEUVERS IN NORWAY. SUCH SENSITIVITIES UNDERSTANDABLE FROM FINLAND'S PERSPECTIVE. LANGUAGE OF FINNISH/SOVIET 1948 FCMA TREATY REFERS SPECIFICALLY TO THREAT TO FINLAND OR TO SOVIET UNION THROUGH FINLAND FROM GERMANY OR GERMANY'S ALLIED. IN 1961 NOTE CRISIS THE SOVIET UNION CITED ALLEGED WEST GERMAN MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SCANDINAVIA, GERMAN NAVAL BUILDUP IN BALTIC, AND SPREAD OF GERMAN MILITARISTIC INFLUENCE IN DENMARK AND NORWAY AS PRETEXT FOR DEMANDING MILITARY CONSULTATIONS WITH FINLAND, AS PROVIDED FOR IN 1948 TREATY. (FINLAND WAS ABLE AT THAT TIME DISSUADE SOVIETS FROM INSISTING ON TALKS.) FINNS OBVIOUSLY WISH AVOID ANY SITUATION WHICH SIMILARLY WULD GIVE SOVIETS PRETEXT

FOR MOVE AGAINST FINLAND UNDER 1948 TREATY. HOWEVER,
FINNISH EXPRESSION OF CONCERN, SUCH AS LAST FALL IN
OSLO, ALSO CLEARLY SERVE SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY
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OBJECTIVES AND FAIL TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION
NORWAY'S SECURITY NEEDS AND NATO TIES, THUS OPENING
FINLAND TO KIND OF CRITICISM CURRENTLY BEING EXPRESSED
BY DIE WELT AND AFTENPOSTEN. FINNS ALSO DO NOT
CONCEDE PUBLICLY THAT SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP ON
KOLA PENINSULA CAN ALSO AFFECT SO-CALLED NORDIC
BALANCE.
AUSTAD

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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